

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 02837 271544Z

70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EA-11 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 SAJ-01

ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01 /171 W  
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R 271455Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6475

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, UR, XO

SUBJ: PRAVDA OVSERVER ON DIEGO GARCIA

1. SUMMARY: EXTENSIVE SOVIET PRESS REACTION TO EXPAN-  
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 02837 271544Z

SION OF DIEGO GARCIA FACILITY HAS BEEN ELEVATED TO

QUASI-OFFICIAL LEVEL WITH PUBLICATION OF AUTHORITATIVE  
"OBSERVER" COMMENTARY IN PRAVDA FEB 27. ARBATOV  
PRIVATELY HARKED BACK TO 1971 SOVIET TRIAL BALLOON ON  
NAVAL LIMITATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. OVSERVER, AN ANONYMOUS SIGNATURE RESERVED FOR  
COMMENTARIES APPROVED AT HIGH LEVEL, REVIEWS FOREIGN  
REACTION TO US/UK AGREEMENT ON EXPANDING DIEGO  
GARCIA TO "HUGE" AMERICAN MILITARY BASE. IN SUMMARIZING  
OFFICIAL CONDEMNATION BY LITTORAL STATES, COMMENTARY  
FEATURES INDIAN, INDONESIAN AND MALAGASY STATEMENTS AND  
MENTIONS OTHER NEGATIVE GOVERNMENTAL REACTIONS FROM  
BANGLADESH, SRI LANKA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND,  
MALAYSIA, AND THAILAND. IT RHETORICALLY ASKS WHY U.S.  
AND UK INCREASING THEIR PRESENCE IN REGION AGAINST  
WILL OF PEOPLES.

3. DISMISSING ALLEGED SOVIET THREAT AS JUSTIFICATION  
FOR EXPANSION, OBSERVER QUOTES PASSAGE OF SOVIET -INDIA  
JOINT DECLARATION ISSUED DURING BREZHNEV NOVEMBER VISIT  
TO INDIA WHICH EXPRESSES WILLINGNESS TO SEEK FAVORABLE  
SOLUTION TO QUESTION OF MAKING INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF  
PEACE. REAL EXPLANATION FOR EXPANSION, OBSERVER  
ASSERTS, IS DESIRE OF PENTAGON "TO PROVIDE ITSELF  
WITH A MILITARY BRIDGEHEAD FOR ITS FAR-REACHING AIMS  
IN THIS STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT REGION OF THE WORLD."  
COMMENTARY GOES ON TO PLACE DIEGO GARCIA IN CONTEXT OF  
CONCERN AMONG "MILITARIST CIRCLES" OVER POSITIVE  
DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA. IT ALSO DRAGS IN  
CHINESE ANGLE, CHARGING THAT PRC VERBAL ENDORSEMENT  
OF INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE IS CONTRADICTED BY ITS  
EFFORTS TO JUSTIFY U.S. DIEGO GARCIA BASE THROUGH  
SLANDER OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AND FLEET USE OF  
INDIAN OCEAN. MOREOVER, PEKING IS ALLEGEDLY BRUITING  
ITS OWN INTENTIONS TO ESTABLISH AN INDIAN OCEAN  
MILITARY PRESENCE.

4. ADHERING TO LINE SET OUT IN PREVIOUS COMMENTARIES,  
OBSERVER RECALLS DISPATCH OF U.S. NAVY VESSELS TO  
BANGLADESH COAST IN 1971 CRISIS AND "SHOW OF FORCE"  
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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 02837 271544Z

OFF ARAB COASTS DURING RECENT MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. IT  
CONCLUDES THAT DECISION OF U.S./UK "MILITARISTS" ON  
DIEGO GARCIA INCREASES THREAT TO INDEPENDENCE OF  
COUNTRIES IN THE REGION AND RUNS COUNTER TO ASPIRATIONS  
OF PEOPLES FOR PEACE IN INDIAN OCEAN AND ENTIRE WORLD.

5. COMMENT: OBSERVER PIECE COMES AFTER RETURNS ARE  
IN FROM INDIAN OCEAN GOVERNMENTS AND STANDS A NOTCH

BELOW AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT PROTESTING DECISION. IT IS PROBABLY MEANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO NEGATIVE REACTION IN AREA WITHOUT GOING SO FAR AS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOVIET INTERESTS ARE DIRECTLY AT STAKE.

6. LIKE OTHER COMMENTARIES ON SUBJECT, OBSERVER ARTICLE CONTAINS NO ALLUSION TO BREZHNEV'S 1971 MENTION OF POSSIBLE NAVAL LIMITATIONS . SOME SOVIETS PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, HAVE ALLUDED TO SOVIET INITIATIVES ON THIS SUBJECT AND HAVE IMPLIED THAT U.S. HAS TAKEN NEGATIVE ATTITUDE. IN ADDITION TO REMARKS OF RETIRED SOVIET GENERAL TO "TIMES OF INDIA" (NEW DELHI 2506), USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV REFERRED TO THE BREZHNEV PROPOSAL IN TALKING TO WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS GROUP FEBRUARY 25. ASKED ABOUT GROWTH OF SOVIET NAVAL STRENGTH, ARBATOV RIPOSTED WITH REFERENCE TO BREZHNEV 1971 SPEECH, THEN SUGGESTED THAT TWO COUNTRIES GET TOGETHER ON NAVAL LIMITATIONS IN INDIAN OCEAN.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**To:** STATE  
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